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ABSTRACT

During each semester of fiscal year (FY) 1990, a survey was conducted of enrollees in telecourses at Howard Community College. The purpose of the study was to assist program planners in understanding the motivations, enrollment and viewing patterns, demographics, and goals of students who enroll in telecourses. Survey responses were obtained from 53% of the 731 students enrolled in telecourses in FY 1990, although not all classes were surveyed and no efforts were made to obtain a random sample. Where relevant, comparisons were made with survey responses from FY 1989. Study findings included the following: (1) a majority of respondents to the telecourse survey were either female (73%), under age 30 (57%), white (82%), or employed full-time (73%); (2) over half of telecourse enrollees each semester were new to the concept of telecourses, and over half were taking other courses at the time; (3) 52% of the respondents indicated that their primary goal in taking a telecourse was to earn credits to transfer to a four-year institution; (4) 96% had a video cassette recorder at home, and 56% used it to record classes; (5) 64% said they would be interested in using a modem to communicate with their on-campus instructor; (6) a majority of enrollees expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the courses and indicated they would enroll in another telecourse; and (7) as was true in FY 1989, the "presentation of material" category received the lowest overall satisfaction rating by respondents. (JMC)

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Howard Community College

FINDINGS FROM THE FISCAL YEAR 1990 SURVEY OF TELECOURSE STUDENTS

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Barbara B. Livieratos

RESEARCH REPORT NUMBER 68
NOVEMBER 1990

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FINDINGS FROM THE FISCAL YEAR 1990 SURVEY OF TELECOURSE STUDENTS

OFFICE OF PLANNING AND EVALUATION
HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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FINDINGS FROM THE FISCAL YEAR 1990 SURVEY OF TELECOURSE STUDENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ii

LIST OF TABLES AND CHARTS v

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY vi

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION 1

FISCAL YEAR 1990 TELECOURSE ENROLLMENT 2

CHARACTERISTICS OF FISCAL YEAR 1990 TELECOURSE ENROLLEES 4

ENROLLMENT PATTERNS OF FISCAL YEAR 1990 TELECOURSE SURVEY RESPONDENTS 7

HOW STUDENTS FOUND OUT ABOUT TELECOURSES 12

STUDENTS' REASONS FOR REGISTERING FOR A TELECOURSE 14

SURVEY RESPONDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH THEIR TELECOURSES 16

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUMMER TELECOURSE ENROLLEES AND THOSE IN OTHER SEMESTERS 18

CONCLUDING REMARKS 20

LIST OF MOST RECENT RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS 21

List of Tables and Charts

Chart 1: FY90 Telecourse Enrollments by Discipline 2

Table One: Telecourse Survey Respondents and Telecourse Enrollment 3

Table Two: Characteristics of FY90 Telecourse Enrollees 5

Chart 2: Education Level and Employment Status of FY90 Telecourse Survey Respondents 6

Table Three: Survey Respondent' Past, Present and Future Enrollment in Telecourses 9

Chart 3: Primary Goal for FY90 Telecourse Enrollees 11

Table Four-A: How Survey Respondents found out about their Telecourse 13

Table Four-B: Telecourse Survey Respondents' Choice for Sources of Future Information 13

Table Five: Percent of Respondents' Rating Reasons for Registering for a telecourse 15

Table Six: Survey Respondents' Mean Ratings of Satisfaction with their Telecourse 17

Table Seven: Responses to the Expanded Summer Edition of the Telecourse Survey 19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Telecourses continue to be a popular alternative to classroom courses for those with demanding schedules and family responsibilities. Enrollees in Howard Community College's telecourses were surveyed during each semester of fiscal year 1990. This report provides detail on the findings from those surveys and for the fiscal year as a whole. Highlights from the report include:

- The majority of respondents to the telecourse survey were female, under age 30, white and employed full time.
- Over half of telecourse enrollees each semester were new to the concept of telecourses, and over half were taking other courses at the same time.
- Over half of the telecourse enrollees' primary goal in taking a telecourse was to earn credits to transfer to a four-year institution.
- Almost all the respondents had VCRs and used them to record their telecourses. More than half said they would be interested in using a modem to communicate with their on-campus instructor.
- A majority of telecourse enrollees express a high degree of satisfaction with the courses and say that they would enroll in another telecourse.
- As found in other surveys, the best source of information about telecourses was the schedule mailed to homes.
- Responses to the survey differed somewhat for enrollees in summer telecourses. A majority of summer enrollees had earned credits at another institution within the last two years, and almost a third were registered at another institution for the fall semester.

FINDINGS FROM THE FISCAL YEAR 1990 SURVEY OF TELECOURSE STUDENTS

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Telecourses have been a favored alternative to classroom courses at Howard Community College (HCC) for almost ten years. In fiscal year 1990, HCC offered 30 telecourses, more than in any other year to date. Telecourses are also growing in use by other colleges throughout Maryland and the United States. In Maryland there is a regional consortium of community colleges and four campuses of the University of Maryland system, College of the Air, which broadcasts telecourses on Maryland Public Television. For the past two years at HCC surveys of telecourse students have been administered at the end of every semester. The purpose of these surveys is to assist program planners in understanding the motivations, enrollment and viewing patterns, demographics, and goals of students who enroll in telecourses. While this knowledge will help to better anticipate and meet student needs, it is also valuable in developing marketing and recruitment strategies.

An attempt was made to have all telecourse enrollees throughout fiscal year 1990 complete the specially designed survey by having the HCC instructor for each course distribute the survey to students at one of the last scheduled on-campus meetings of the telecourse participants. There was a good deal of variability in both attendance and in the proportion of students who filled out the survey. It should be noted that in administering this survey throughout the fiscal year, no effort was made to obtain a randomly selected sample, and since entire courses, or in a few cases, the majority of the enrollees in a course were not surveyed, it would not be appropriate to generalize the findings from this survey as true for all telecourse enrollees. The findings are most certainly valid for the group who responded, and they represent a majority of telecourse enrollees.

The following report presents the findings from the telecourse survey for FY90. Results are given for each semester and for the fiscal year as a whole. Where relevant, comparisons are made between fiscal years 1989 and 1990. In a separate section of the report the findings for summer telecourse enrollees, based on a special addition to the survey, are discussed.

FISCAL YEAR 1990 TELECOURSE ENROLLMENT

There was a diverse assortment of telecourse offerings in fiscal year 1990. Students could satisfy requirements in a number of different program areas by taking these courses. During each semester in the year, the telecourse survey was administered in one of the last classroom meetings with each course's on-campus instructor. **Table One** gives an overview of the enrollment in telecourses for FY90 and also shows the percentage of each courses's enrollees who responded to the survey.

- The response rate for the entire fiscal year was 53 percent. Within courses, percentages of enrollees responding to the telecourse survey ranged from 0 percent to 83 percent. Of the 30 telecourses offered during the fiscal year, 18 had 50 percent or more of the enrollees responding to the survey. The FY90 response rate was considerably lower than that of FY89 - 64 percent. There were more telecourses offered in FY90 (30 versus the 26 in FY89), and there were more telecourse enrollments - 731 versus 699 in FY89.

- Fiscal year 1990 telecourse enrollments by discipline are show below in **Chart One.** The three highest enrolled disciplines in FY90 were: business/management, psychology/sociology and history/economics.

FY90 TELECOURSE ENROLLMENTS
BY DISCIPLINE

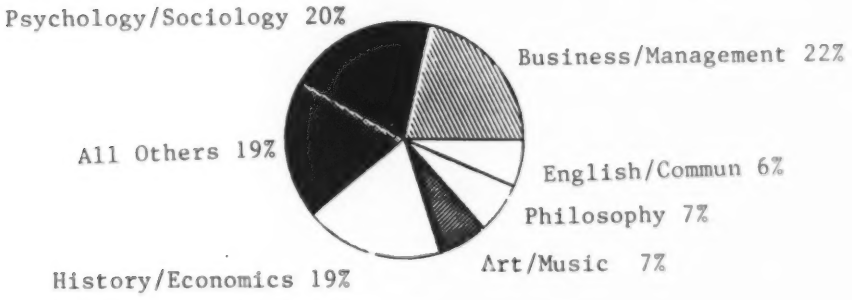


CHART ONE

TABLE ONE

TELECOURSE SURVEY RESPONDENTS AND TELECOURSE ENROLLMENT

TELECOURSE		TOTAL FY90 ENROLLMENT	TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	% OF ENROLLEES RESPONDING
AC 111	Principles of Accounting	18	10	56%
AR 104	Art History I	26	12	46%
BU 100	Introduction to Business and Organization	54	32	59%
BU 130	Principles of Marketing	21	13	62%
BU 151	Business Law I	13	10	77%
CM 111	Introduction to Composition	36	19	53%
CM 204	English Literature II	11	5	45%
CS 120	Introduction to Computer Systems	9	3	33%
EC 101	Principles of Economics	20	12	60%
EC 102	Principles of Economics Micro	18	15	83%
FA 101	Humanities Thru the Arts	19	11	58%
FR 101	Elements of French I	7	1	14%
HE 101	Introduction to Health Education	45	7	16%
HY 101	History of Western Civilization	16	7	44%
HY 111	American History to 1877	40	26	65%
HY 112	American History Since 1877	28	13	46%
MA 200	Statistics	9	5	56%
MN 140	Principles of Management	52	24	46%
MU 102	Survey Music Literature	5	2	40%
PL 101	Introduction to Philosophy	35	20	57%
PL 103	Introduction to Ethics	15	10	67%
PO 101	American Federal Government	16	0	0%
PY 101	General Psychology	61	45	74%
PY 103	Child Growth and Development	39	21	54%
SC 104	Elementary Astronomy	42	16	38%
SO 101	Introduction to Sociology	39	30	77%
SO 103	Marriage and the Family	9	2	22%
ST 383	Oceanus: Marine Environment	19	10	53%
ST 434	Japan: The Living Tradition	3	0	0%
ST 463	History of Women 1607-1870	6	4	67%
	TOTAL	731	385	53%

CHARACTERISTICS OF FISCAL YEAR 1990 TELECOURSE ENROLLEES

The telecourse survey contained a section of questions designed to identify respondents' demographic characteristics. These characteristics are shown in **Table Two.** Highlights of the table include:

- While the respondents throughout the year were predominantly female (73%), there was a 5 percent increase in the proportion of male respondents (22% in FY89 versus 27 percent in FY90).

- The increase in traditional age students in FY90 was echoed in telecourse enrollment, with 17 percent of survey respondents under 20 years old, compared to 8 percent in FY89. Fully 57 percent were under age 30 in FY90.

- The overall racial composition of telecourses appeared to change little from last year, with 82 percent white, 13 percent black, and 5 percent other in FY90. Comparable figures for FY89 were: 80 percent white, 11 percent black and 9 percent other.

- Thirty percent of the respondents to the telecourse survey in FY90 had some sort of post-secondary credential.

- The majority of the FY90 telecourse survey respondents (73%) were working full time while they took their telecourses. This was a 3 percent increase in full-time employment from the FY89 figure of 70 percent.

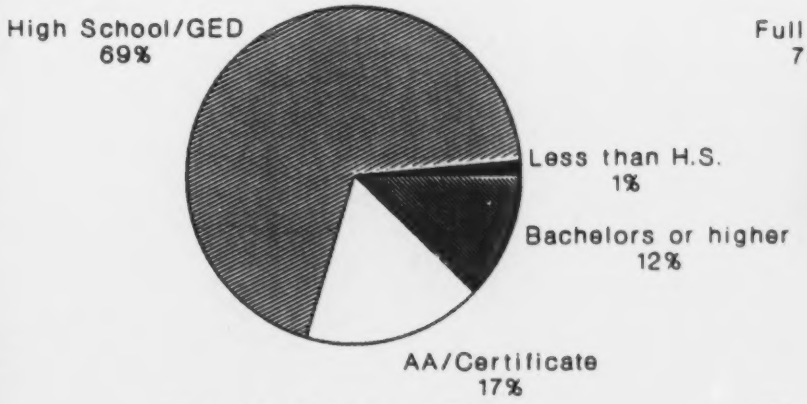
- In FY90 among those who worked, there was an 11 percent decrease from FY89 in the proportion who worked regular day hours (FY90: 73% versus FY89: 84%). The corresponding increases in the other categories were: 1.5 percent more worked in the early evening, 3 percent more worked late evening, and 6 percent more worked rotating shifts.

Changes from FY89 to FY90 were noted in a number of the characteristics mentioned above. Although most of these changes were not dramatic, they are worth noting and observing as possible indicators of future trends. In FY90 there were more males than in FY89, there were more in the youngest age categories, the percentage of blacks was up, somewhat more were working full time, and a lower percentage worked a regular day time schedule.

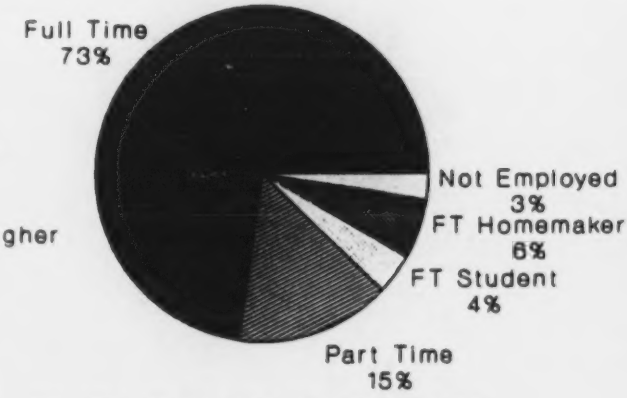
TABLE TWO
CHARACTERISTICS OF FY90 TELECOURSE ENROLLEES

CHARACTERISTICS	FALL '89 N=119 %	SPRING '90 N=181 %	SUMMER '90 N=85 %	TOTAL N=385 %
Sex:				
Male	27.4	26.5	28.2	27.4
Female	72.6	73.5	71.8	72.6
Age:				
11-20	20.7	10.9	25.9	17.2
21-30	33.0	43.6	40.0	39.7
31-40	33.0	27.9	27.1	29.3
41-50	12.3	15.2	5.9	12.1
51 and over	0.9	2.4	1.4	1.7
Mean Age	29.7	31.0	27.9	29.9
Race:				
Black	11.7	11.0	15.3	12.9
White	81.6	75.1	77.6	81.7
Other/Unknown	6.8	13.8	7.1	5.4
Current Education Level:				
Less than 12th grade	2.9	1.2	0	1.4
GED	4.8	7.2	3.6	5.9
High School Diploma	66.3	54.7	69	63.0
Certificate	4.8	1.1	4.8	3.1
AA Degree	13.5	15.5	10.7	14.3
Bachelor's	5.8	8.8	7.1	7.8
Post Graduate	1.9	5.0	6.0	4.4
Employment Status:				
Full-Time	74.5	69.4	74.7	72.7
Part-Time	15.1	17.1	10.8	15.0
Full-Time Student	2.8	4.1	4.8	3.9
Full-Time Homemaker	4.7	5.9	7.2	5.8
Not Employed	2.8	2.4	2.4	2.5
Work Schedule:				
Regular Day Time	73.7	75.5	68.5	73.4
Early Evening	5.3	7.3	2.7	5.6
Late Evening	10.5	6.0	8.2	7.8
Rotating Shifts	10.5	10.6	19.2	13.1

EDUCATION LEVEL AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF FY90 TELECOURSE SURVEY RESPONDENTS



EDUCATION LEVEL



EMPLOYMENT STATUS

CHART TWO

ENROLLMENT PATTERNS OF FISCAL YEAR 1990 TELECOURSE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Knowing telecourse students' enrollment patterns, goals, and viewing habits could prove to be valuable in developing marketing tactics for telecourses. The FY90 telecourse survey provided that data and more. **Table Three** gives the detailed picture of these findings. Among the table's highlights are:

- A substantial number of telecourse enrollees each semester of FY90 had taken a telecourse at HCC before - 45 percent in the fall and 43 percent in the spring. An additional 2 percent and 4 percent, respectively had taken telecourses elsewhere. Proportionately more summer enrollees were new to telecourses, with only 34 percent having had experience with telecourses previously.

- Thirty-six percent of the students in the fall semester would have enrolled in a standard class of the same course if the course had not been offered as a telecourse. In the spring and summer semesters, 55 percent would have. Taken all together, 50 percent in FY90 would have enrolled in a standard class, and 50 percent would not have. This finding is similar to last year's.

- Although the majority of respondents took only one telecourse at a time (77%), an average of 23 percent were enrolled in two or more telecourses at a time.

- Forty-six percent of FY90 respondents were taking only telecourses in the semester during which they were surveyed. Other respondents were enrolled in a variety of other classes, including: HCC on and off campus/day and evening classes, HCC's Weekend College classes and classes at other colleges.

- Transferring to a four-year institution was the primary goal in taking telecourses for 52 percent of the FY90 survey respondents (49% in FY89). Others wanted to explore a new career or academic area (14%), prepare for immediate entry into a career (9%), update skills for their current job (4%), or were taking courses purely out of interest or for self-enrichment (6%).

- Telecourse enrollees seem to like the experience - 88 percent of them say they would take another telecourse. This figure remained unchanged from last year's survey. There were, however, differences between those enrolled during the academic year and summer enrollees. Over 90 percent of those in the fall and spring semesters said they would take another telecourse, while only 79 percent of the summer students said they would.

- There was a slight upward movement in the percentage of respondents who said they would be interested in using a modem to communicate with instructors or take exams - 64 percent this year versus 61 percent in FY89. At the same time, there was a decrease in the percentage of respondents who have a micro available for use: 49 percent in FY90 versus 55 percent in FY89. Only 28 percent of FY90 respondents have a modem available for use, while it was 31 percent in FY89.

- Almost all (96%) of FY90 telecourse respondents have a VCR.

- More than half (56%) of the FY90 respondents said that they always or usually record the programs for later viewing, while 34 percent said that they always or usually watch as it is televised. A surprising 10 percent admitted to not watching or recording the programs, but relying on the textbooks. The same percentage of respondents in FY89 said they did not watch the programs.

- Less than half of the respondents (46%) used the library tapes of the programs. Of those who used the tapes, 90 percent found them to be satisfactory.

There seem to be some distinct differences between those enrolled during the academic year and summer students in many of the areas discussed above. Summer students were more likely to be taking their first telecourse, and most of them were not taking any other classes. More of those in summer telecourses had transferring to a four year institution as their primary goal, and fewer of them would take another telecourse. This may reflect the fact that more summer students anticipate transferring and thus view the opportunity and necessity for taking telecourses as a less viable future option than those students enrolled during the academic year.

TABLE THREE
SURVEY RESPONDENTS' PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE ENROLLMENT IN TELECOURSES

SURVEY ITEM	FALL '89 N=119 %	SPRING '90 N=181 %	SUMMER '90 N=85 %	FY90 TOTAL N=385 %
Have taken TV credit college course before:				
Yes, at HCC	45.4	41.6	31.8	40.4
Yes, elsewhere	1.9	3.9	2.4	3.0
No	52.8	54.5	65.9	56.6
Would have enrolled in standard class of same course:				
Yes	36.2	54.8	54.8	49.5
No	63.8	45.2	45.2	50.5
Other telecourses now taking:				
None	74.5	71.8	84.7	76.7
One	21.6	19.9	14.1	18.2
Two	1.9	6.1	1.2	3.6
Three or more	1.9	2.3	0	1.6
Other college classes this semester:				
Evening class on HCC campus	27.3	29.4	13.6	25.5
Day class on HCC campus	24.0	20.2	9.1	19.0
None	27.3	25.2	60.2	33.0
Other telecourse(s)	14.0	13.8	10.2	13.1
Off-campus HCC campus	0	1.4	2.3	0.2
Class(es) at another college	4.1	8.7	4.5	6.6
Weekend HCC class	3.3	1.4	0	1.6
Primary goal in taking courses:				
Transfer to a four year institution	51.9	52.0	54.1	52.4
Exploration of new career or academic area	15.7	16.0	9.4	14.4
Preparation of immediate entry into a career	7.4	8.6	10.6	8.7
Update skills for a job currently held	3.7	4.6	4.7	4.3
Interest and self-enrichment	8.3	5.7	4.7	6.3
Other	13.0	13.2	16.5	13.9
Would take another telecourse:				
Yes	90.6	91.8	78.8	88.4
No	8.5	8.2	21.2	11.7

TABLE THREE
SURVEY RESPONDENTS' PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE ENROLLMENT IN TELECOURSES

SURVEY ITEM	FALL '89 N=119 %	SPRING '90 N=181 %	SUMMER '90 N=85 %	FY90 TOTAL N=385 %
Interested in micro/modem to communicate or take exams:				
Yes	71.4	65.1	52.4	63.9
No	28.6	34.9	47.6	36.1
Have a micro available for use:				
Yes	50.5	51.8	40.0	48.6
No	49.5	48.2	60.0	51.4
Have a modem available for use:				
Yes	30.5	27.2	25.0	27.7
No	69.5	72.8	75.0	72.3
Have a VCR:				
Yes	97.1	97.6	92.9	96.4
No	2.9	2.4	7.1	3.6
Viewing pattern:				
Always record for later viewing	35.9	37.7	28.8	35.1
Usually record for later viewing	23.3	17.9	25.0	21.2
Usually watch as it is televised	15.5	26.5	27.5	23.5
Always watch as it is televised	14.6	10.5	5.0	10.4
Don't watch or record, but rely on textbook	10.7	7.4	13.8	9.9
Have used library tapes:				
Yes	37.7	50.6	45.2	45.5
No	62.3	49.4	54.8	54.5
Satisfied with library tapes:				
Yes	90.7	88.4	91.9	89.8
No	9.3	11.7	8.1	10.2

PRIMARY GOAL FOR FY90 TELECOURSE ENROLLEES

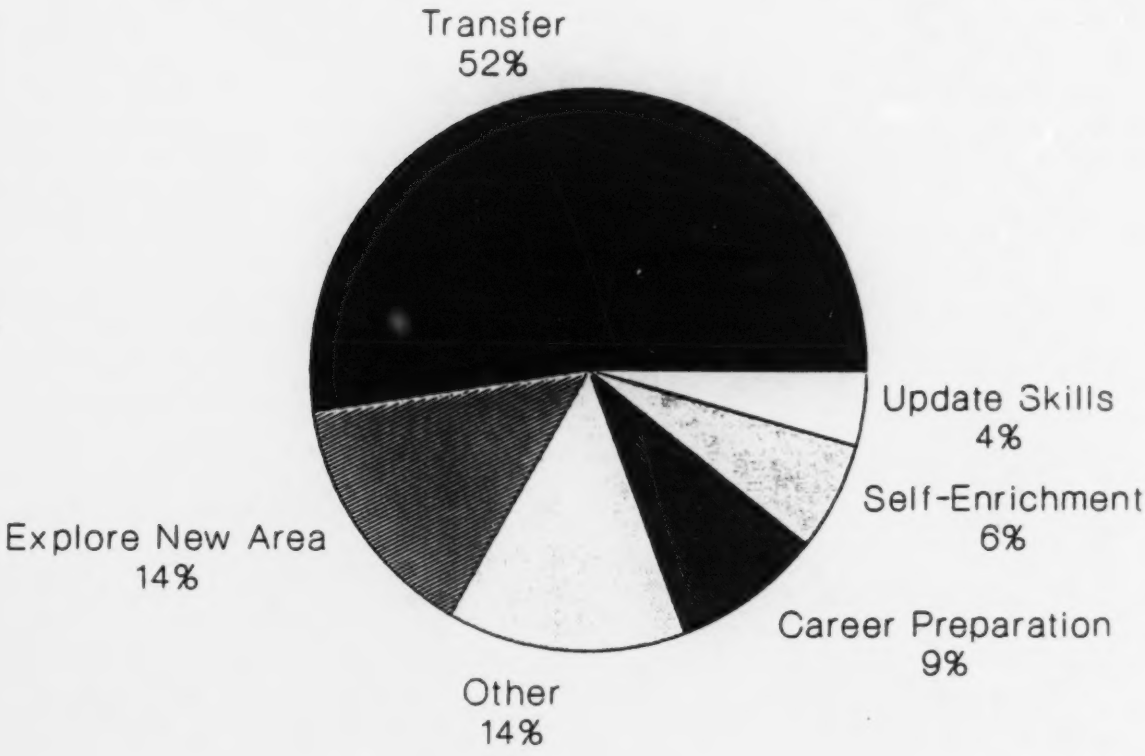


CHART THREE

How Students Found Out About Telecourses

The FY90 telecourse survey asked how students found out about telecourses. They were also asked what their preferred methods were of finding out about future telecourse offerings. The importance of this information lies in its direct application to marketing strategies. **Tables Four A** and **Four B** present the findings about information sources. The tables show that:

- In all semesters of FY90, the three primary sources of information about telecourses were: the schedule of classes mailed to the home (46%), a schedule of classes picked up at HCC (25%), and the recommendation of a friend or relative (11%). The fall semester enrollees, while adhering to this general pattern, showed proportionately fewer finding out about telecourses through the mailed schedule (39%), and somewhat more receiving a recommendation by a friend or relative (15%).

- **Table Four B** gives the choices of information sources for all FY90 telecourse survey respondents. The preferred method by more students than any other is the mailed schedule. A close second is a mailed telecourse brochure.

The mailed schedule has emerged as the most important information source in almost all HCC surveys on which that question was asked. It has also consistently been the preferred source for receiving future information. In light of the importance of the mailed schedule to students, and their clear preference for it, the mailed schedule should receive priority as an information-sharing and recruitment tool. Unlike most other HCC surveys, the recommendations of friends and relatives played a minor role in leading students to enroll in telecourses. We know that word-of-mouth can be a powerful recruitment tool, and telecourse enrollees should be encouraged to tell their friends and relatives about the benefits of distance learning. Since over 90 percent of telecourse students during the academic year would take another telecourse, positive recommendations should not be difficult to elicit.

TABLE FOUR-A
HOW SURVEY RESPONDENTS FOUND OUT ABOUT THEIR TELECOURSE

INFORMATION SOURCE	FALL '89 N=119 %	SPRING '90 N=181 %	SUMMER '90 N=85 %	FY90 TOTAL N=385 %
Schedule of classes mailed to home	38.7	50.3	49.4	46.4
Schedule of classes picked up at HCC	22.7	18.3	38.8	25.1
Telecourse brochure mailed to home	10.9	7.7	2.4	7.8
Telecourse brochure picked up at HCC	1.7	6.1	1.2	3.8
Recommended by friend/relative	15.1	8.9	5.9	10.5
Telephone conversation/HCC telecourse office	1.7	1.1	2.4	1.6
HCC counseling center/advisor	5.0	0.6	0	1.9
Howard County Cable	0.8	1.7	0	1.1
Maryland Public Television	0	0.6	0	0.3
Other	3.4	1.1	0	1.6

TABLE FOUR-B
FY90 TELECOURSE SURVEY RESPONDENTS' CHOICE FOR SOURCES OF FUTURE INFORMATION

INFORMATION SOURCE	1ST CHOICE	2ND CHOICE	3RD CHOICE	ANY CHOICE	
	N	N	N	N	%
Schedule of classes mailed to home	219	59	15	293	33.6
Telecourse brochure mailed to home	71	150	42	263	30.2
Schedule of classes picked up at HCC	6	11	30	47	5.4
Telephone conversation/HCC Telecourse Office	9	9	17	35	4.0
Maryland Public Television	1	11	19	31	3.6
HCC counseling center/advisor	3	12	36	51	5.8
Recommended by friend/relative	2	6	32	40	4.6
Telecourse brochure picked up at HCC	6	11	30	47	5.4
Howard County Cable	1	9	51	61	7.0
Other	1	1	2	4	0.5

STUDENTS' REASONS FOR REGISTERING FOR A TELECOURSE

There are probably as many reasons for registering for a telecourse as there are enrollees. In order to better understand the motivation of students taking this type of course, the survey asked respondents to rate the importance of eight specific reasons for taking telecourses. The data shown in **Table Five** give the percentages of respondents who said that a specific reason was a ***"Very Important"*** influence on their decision to register for a telecourse. Highlights of the table include:

- For all FY90 respondents, the lack of time for class attendance was the predominant influence in telecourse registration. The fall and spring semesters each showed over 70 percent rating that reason as ***"Very Important."*** These findings were similar to those in FY89.

- The ability to combine earning college credits with family responsibility was another reason with high percentages rating it as ***"Very Important"*** (from 55% to 70%).

- Between 52 percent and 57 percent of the telecourse survey respondents each semester in FY90 rated minimizing travel as a ***"Very Important"*** reason for registering for a telecourse.

- In both the fall and spring semesters 41 percent of the respondents said that taking telecourses would allow them to carry a heavier load. In the summer semester, however, that percentage went down to 23 percent. This corresponds to the information presented earlier that many summer telecourse enrollees were not taking other classes.

- Twelve percent of FY90 respondents said they were taking a telecourse to try a new learning method.

- The fact that the course they were taking was only available as a telecourse was important to 19 percent of the summer enrollees, and to 12 percent and 9 percent of the fall and spring respondents, respectively.

- A minority of enrollees thought that taking a telecourse would be less difficult or less work - 6 percent, 8 percent and 11 percent in the fall, spring, and summer, respectively.

- Although a minority of respondents (5%) cited handicaps as a reason for taking telecourses, it must be stressed that for this small number of enrollees, telecourses may constitute one of the best alternative learning modes.

Time constraints and family responsibilities continue to be primary reasons for students enrolling in telecourses. This fact should be considered in the planning and marketing of telecourses.

TABLE FIVE
PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS' RATING REASONS FOR REGISTERING FOR A TELECOURSE

	FALL '89 N=119 %	SPRING '90 N=181 %	SUMMER '90 N=85 %	FY90 TOTAL N=385
Lacked time for class attendance	78.1	72.8	67.9	73.2
Possible combine family responsibility	70.0	69.0	55.4	66.1
Minimize travel	57.3	56.4	51.8	55.6
Allowed a heavier load	40.8	40.8	23.2	36.7
Try a new learning method	10.9	12.8	10.8	11.8
Course only available as telecourse	12.0	9.4	19.3	12.5
Thought telecourse less difficult	5.9	8.0	11.0	8.1
Handicaps make telecourse more appealing	9.0	3.5	3.6	5.1

SURVEY RESPONDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH THEIR TELECOURSES

The telecourse survey asked students how satisfied they were with various aspects of their telecourses. Responses to these questions were rated on a five point scale, with one being ***"not at all satisfied,"*** and five meaning ***"highly satisfied."*** **Table Six** presents the results of these items on satisfaction by showing the mean ratings given. Table highlights include:

- Instructor contact was the item rated most highly by FY90 telecourse survey respondents (4.2). Among the fall enrollees, in fact, this item received a 4.5 rating.

- Ratings on the content of the material ranged from 3.3 to 3.8, with the combined FY90 rating being 3.6.

- The lowest ratings of all were given to the item on the presentation of the material (3.5). This item was also rated lowest in FY89 (3.3). FY90 ratings ranged from 3.2 to 3.7 on this item. Although these were the lowest ratings, it should be noted that these scores are nonetheless positive, since a three on this scale signified ***"satisfied."***

- Respondents were satisfied with the text and study guides for their courses. This item received ratings of 3.8 to 4.3, with a combined rating of 4.0.

- The ratings on overall satisfaction ranged from 3.8 to 4.3. Interestingly, the fall respondents had not only higher overall ratings than those in the other semesters, but they also gave higher ratings on each of the other satisfaction items. On all the satisfaction items ratings by FY90 telecourse survey respondents were slightly higher than those given in FY89.

As evidenced by the statements above, survey respondents exhibited a good deal of satisfaction with various aspects of their telecourses. For this group of HCC enrollees with such severe time constraints and pressing family responsibilities that the majority lacked time for attending classes, telecourses offered a satisfying alternative. They were able to meet their employment and family obligations, yet were still able to earn college credit.

TABLE SIX
SURVEY RESPONDENTS' MEAN RATINGS OF SATISFACTION WITH THEIR TELECOURSE

TELECOURSE ELEMENT	MEAN SCORES ON A FIVE-POINT SCALE			
	FALL '89 N=119	SPRING '90 N=181	SUMMER '90 N=85	FY90 TOTAL N=385
Instructor contact	4.5	4.0	4.1	4.2
Content of material	3.8	3.6	3.3	3.6
Presentation of material	3.7	3.5	3.2	3.5
Text/study guide	4.3	3.8	3.8	4.0
Overall satisfaction	4.3	3.8	3.8	4.0

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUMMER TELECOURSE ENROLLEES AND THOSE IN OTHER SEMESTERS

Summer telecourse enrollees were given the same telecourse survey as those enrolled during the academic year. In addition, summer enrollees were asked to complete a special supplement to the regular survey. The additional data gathered on summer enrollees is displayed in **Table Seven.** Facts of interest include:

- Among the summer telecourse survey respondents, 65 percent had taken credit courses at HCC. Of those who had attended HCC, fully 100 percent had done so within the last two years.

- 61 percent had taken credit courses at another college or university. This figure was considerably up from the 53 percent reported in FY89.

- Of those who had attended another institution, 62 percent had done so less than two years ago, 18 percent from two to four years ago, and 21 percent five or more years ago.

- When asked if they were registered for fall courses at HCC, 38 percent said they were. This figure is down from the 50 percent who were registered in FY89. One-third of the summer students were registered elsewhere, and 29 percent were not registered for fall courses.

- In rating the importance of various factors in their decision to take a summer telecourse, more students (79%) said that needing credits in the subject area was a very important reason than any other single reason.

- Forty-three percent said they needed the credits for transferring, with the same number saying they needed to meet certification requirements. Some time pressure was felt by the 29 percent who said they needed credits by a specific date. Twenty-seven percent said they registered for a telecourse because of the limited number of summer courses. Only 23 percent said they had more time in the summer, and a mere 3 percent said they had been closed out of a regular course.

- Summer enrollees were asked, ***"If you had a choice, what type of credit course would you take?"*** A classroom course was the choice of a majority (60%) of the respondents. Telecourses were preferred by 36 percent, and only 3 percent would have liked to take a computerized course.

Most of the summer telecourse survey respondents had taken credit courses at HCC within the last two years. Many had also taken credit courses at another college or university. Needing credits in a given subject area was a very important reason for most registering for a summer telecourse. Although they would have preferred a classroom course, for many summer enrollees, time constraints made telecourses the best alternative.

TABLE SEVEN
RESPONSES TO THE EXPANDED SUMMER EDITION OF THE TELECOURSE SURVEY

SURVEY ITEMS	PERCENT
HCC CREDIT COURSES:	
Yes	65.4%
No	34.6%
Last Attended HCC: (n=53)	
Two or more years ago	0%
Within the last two years	100%
Credit Courses at Another College or University:	
Yes	60.8%
No	39.2%
Last Attended Other Institution:	
Five or more years ago	20.5%
Two to four years ago	17.9%
Less than two years ago	61.5%
Register for Fall '89 Courses:	
Yes, at HCC	38.2%
Yes, elsewhere	32.9%
No	28.9%
Rated as Very Important Reason:	
Need credits in subject area	78.7%
Need credits for transferring	43.1%
Need credits by a specific date	28.8%
Meet certification requirements	42.5%
Limited number of summer courses	27.0%
More time in summer	23.3%
Closed out of regular course	2.8%
Type of Credit Course of Choice:	
Classroom course	59.5%
Telecourse	36.5%
Computerized course	2.7%
Other	1.3%

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The results from this and past surveys have pointed out the basis for marketing strategies to target prospective and repeat telecourse enrollees. The mailed schedule is a primary source of information about telecourses, and every effort should be made to retain that as a recruitment tool and to explore ways of touting telecourses in the schedule. Since telecourse enrollment is split just about evenly between those who have taken telecourses before and those who haven't, a two-pronged approach should be used to attract both groups to telecourses. The generally high level of satisfaction with telecourses should be used as a vehicle for recruitment by encouraging current enrollees to spread the word among their relatives and friends.

Telecourses and distance learning in all its forms are sure to be important alternatives to regular classroom attendance as long as furthering education continues to be a high priority for those with demanding work and class schedules and family responsibilities. HCC's telecourse students have been shown to be serious about their academic goals and career aspirations.

HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
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